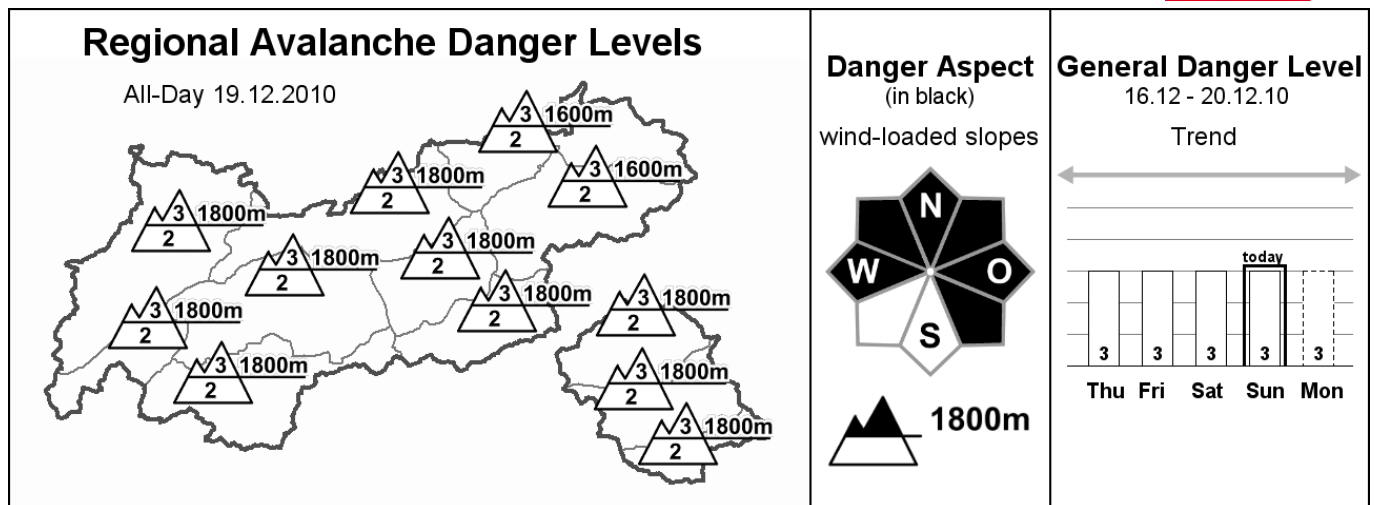


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Sunday, 19.12.2010, at 07:30



Beware widespread fresh snowdrift, especially above the treeline

AVALANCHE DANGER

Above the treeline, considerable avalanche danger generally prevails, beneath that altitude it decreases, first to moderate, further down to low. The peril above the treeline is so high because of the increasingly strong winds, in some places reaching storm velocity, which have led to widespread snow transport. The freshly formed snowdrift accumulations, which occur particularly frequently in steep areas near ridge lines on northwest to north to southeast facing slopes and generally in gullies and bowls, can be triggered even by minimum additional loading in very steep terrain. For old snowdrift masses, large additional loading is by now necessary. Avalanche prone locations for the older snowdrift are often between about 1900 and 2300 m on west to north to east facing slopes and above 3000 m in northern expositions, and are particularly trigger sensitive in transition areas from shallow to deep snow. In the regions with the most snow, especially at low and intermediate altitudes, there is also the hazard of full depth snowslides on steep, grassy slopes.

SNOW LAYERING

The wind is the decisive factor in the avalanche danger, it has transported great masses of the predominantly loosely packed fresh fallen snow. Fresh snowdrift masses can be triggered at the transition line to the loose new fallen snow - atop of which is a layer of surface hoar in many places. Additional potential bed surfaces for avalanches can be found in the central section of the snowpack, often on west to north to east facing slopes between 1900 and 2300 m in the layers encircling the thin ice crusts. Equally, a layer of depth hoar which formed near the ground in early winter on shady, steep slopes could also provide a bed surface for slab avalanches.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather: a low is moving across northern Europe, bringing westerly air currents to Tyrol. Milder air masses from the Atlantic have reached us, together with a disturbance which will brush the northern regions tomorrow. On Tuesday and Wednesday, mild southwesterly currents accompanied by foehn winds in North Tyrol, with rainfall gradually reaching the southern flank of the Alps. Foehn influence will probably last until Thursday. Mountain weather today: diffuse visibility due to high altitude cloudbanks on the Main Alpine Ridge and in the Northern Alps. In the Hohe Tauern, the Dolomites and bordering mountain regions, it will be sunnier. Despite rising temperatures, the cold is intense, due to the wind. Temperatures at 2000 m will rise to minus 7 degrees; at 3000 m to minus 15 degrees. Strong southwesterly wind, in the regions bordering the Main Alpine Ridge to the north, the winds will reach storm velocity.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

To begin with, no significant change in the avalanche situation.

Patrick Nairz

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe